

Thinking Errors

All or Nothing Thinking (also called black-and-white, polarized, or dichotomous thinking): You view a situation in only two categories instead of on a continuum. OK, Good Enough, Partially succeeding are not acknowledged. "Only perfect is good enough". Everything goes into success and failure categories (often the success category is very narrow).

Anticipating Negative Outcomes: You expect that something negative has happened or is going to happen. People will avoid situations and never get disconfirming evidence. It can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Dispute with "What is the evidence?"

- ♦ **Fortune Telling:** You predict that something negative is going to happen in the future, as if you were gazing into a crystal ball. Base judgments on past experiences and ignore that every situation is new.
- ♦ **Catastrophizing:** You tell yourself that the very worst is happening or is going to happen, w/o considering other possibilities that may be more likely or less negative. "I never...". Sometimes when client face these horrible images and fears they become less frightening.

Disqualifying or Discounting the Positive: You unreasonably tell yourself that positive experiences, deeds, or qualities do not count. Refuse to take credit for success—attribute success to some vague unknown source. This keeps one from gaining confidence that they can handle feared situations.

Emotional Reasoning: You think something must be true because you "feel" (actually, believe) it so strongly, ignoring or discounting evidence to the contrary.

Labeling: You put a fixed, global label on yourself or others without considering that the evidence might more reasonably lead to a less disastrous conclusion. Summarize feelings of a situation with a negative label. It is not liking a behavior of someone or oneself, and making a judgment about their worth as a person.

Mental Filter (also called selective abstraction): You pay undue attention to one negative detail instead of seeing the whole picture. Focus on one negative details colors your perspective on the whole situation.

Mind Reading: You believe you know what others are thinking, failing to consider other, more likely, possibilities, and you make no effort to check it out. You don't consider other neutral or positive possibilities.

Overgeneralization: You make a sweeping negative conclusion that goes far beyond the current situation. Not giving self a 2nd chance if something went poorly the first time.

Should, Must, Have to or Ought Statements (also called imperatives): You have a precise, fixed idea of how you or others should behave and you overestimate how bad it is when these expectations are not met. No room for flexibility.

Maladaptive Thoughts: Problematic thoughts that do not contain logical thinking errors. These thoughts may be true. However, dwelling on them makes you feel more anxious and interferes with your performance. Value judgments.